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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KPKO](#) [KDEM](#) [CG](#) [ELECTIONS](#)
SUBJECT: DRC ELECTIONS: BEMBA PLEDGES TO LEAD POLITICAL
OPPOSITION

REF: A. KINSHASA 1791
[1](#)B. KINSHASA 1789
[1](#)C. KINSHASA 1766

Classified By: PolOff CBrown, reasons 1.4 b/d.

[1](#)1. (U) Vice President Jean-Pierre Bemba said November 28 he will remain a member of the DRC's political opposition. In a nationally televised address November 28, Bemba said in the larger interest of the nation and of the necessity to preserve peace and prevent violence, he will undertake the responsibility to lead a "strong and republican" opposition. The DRC's Supreme Court November 27 had rejected Bemba's appeals to overturn the October 29 presidential election and declared President Joseph Kabila the victor over Bemba (ref A).

[1](#)2. (U) Bemba did not concede defeat, however. In his speech Bemba said he was disappointed and frustrated by the manner in which the Court treated his electoral challenges. He said the proceedings were neither equitable nor fair and did not reflect the truth of the ballot box. Bemba stated his complaints regarding the election process remain justified (ref B).

[1](#)3. (SBU) Having claimed the Court's ruling was unfair, Bemba then said he would nevertheless accept the results "in the higher interest of the nation" and in order "to preserve peace and save the country from sinking into chaos and violence."

[1](#)4. (C) Bemba said in the coming days he will announce what form his political opposition will take. Bemba adviser Thomas Luhaka, the Secretary General of Bemba's Movement for the Liberation of Congo (MLC) party, told us November 28 that Bemba will register to run for the Senate. Luhaka did not specify in which province Bemba would run, but it would likely be either Kinshasa or his home province of Equateur. The registration period for Senate candidates, which was recently extended by the Independent Electoral Commission (ref C), ends November 30.

[1](#)5. (C) Comment: As usual, Bemba sought to have it both ways by mixing bellicose words with more statesmanlike platitudes. That said, Bemba's acceptance of the Court's ruling, even though he still disagrees with it, is a decidedly positive step in bringing a more peaceful end to a difficult transition process. We will await to see just what kind of "opposition" Bemba intends to lead, and how the Kabila government will respond to it. End comment.

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